

F 148

.S55

Some Forgotten Pennsylvania Heroines

An Address By
Henry W. Shoemaker
At meeting of
Bellefonte Chapter
Daughters of the American Revolution
Bellefonte, Pa., May 6, 1922



Altoona



Published by Times Tribune Co., 1922

F. 148
255

Gift
Author
MAY 5 1922

Some Forgotten Pennsylvania Heroines

Mrs. Richard, and Ladies of Bellefonte Chapter, D. A. R.

Some months ago, in the daily newspapers, a dispatch dated Washington, D. C., propounded this question: "Who were the greatest women in the past history of Pennsylvania?" Without waiting for the readers of the article to offer suggestions, the following names were mentioned: Betsey Ross, Rebecca Biddle, Lydia Darrah, and Lucretia Mott. It would seem a pity if this quartet should be regarded as the final estimate of greatness in Pennsylvania womanhood, despite the years of persistent propaganda at work in favor of some of them. In the first place the genuineness of Betsey Ross's connection other than professional with the first American Flag has been frequently questioned, and were it not for her social connections her claims would probably be entirely outlawed; the same is the case with Rebecca Biddle and Lydia Darrah. In this present age we are too prone to estimate a person's greatness on the basis of wealth and social position. If a wealthy woman delivers a speech, writes a few paragraphs, makes a donation to charity, she is accorded an exalted place in a sycophantic world. A woman's social position cannot be judged by her occupation; a servant girl may come of an aristocratic family, and a millionaire's wife, a common vulgarian. It is women like Lucretia Mott, who have triumphed over life's obstacles, or broken the bonds of caste, and done something uplifting and permanently worth while who will ultimately be classed as the greatest of Pennsylvania women. Lucretia Mott, preacher, teacher and reformer, is too widely known to need further mention here, but there are many other Pennsylvania women, some scarcely mentioned in history's pages, who should be re-discovered. It may some day be a part of the unselfish labors of the D. A. R. to establish them in their proper places among Pennsylvania heroines. In point of fame which transcends the borders of the State, like in the case of Lucretia Mott, we must not fail to mention Mary Jemison, known as the "White Woman of the Genessee." In beautiful Letchworth Park, near Rochester, New York, a handsome bronze statue, on a granite pedestal, testifies the high regard in which this remark-

able Pennsylvania woman is held by the people of the Empire State. As a child, in 1755, Mary Jemison was captured by Indians at her parents' home on Marsh Creek, Franklin County, and taken to Ohio. Later after the fall of Fort Duquesne, she was given the chance to return to her family, but refused, preferring the society of the Indians. She first married a warrior named Sheningey, and after his death became the wife of Hiakatoo, commonly known as Gardeau, a fighting Indian whose name is not remembered in a kindly manner by residents of the West Branch Valley. His part in the tomahawking of the wounded at Fort Freeland, near Milton in 1779, gave him an unenviable reputation, but as to the merits of the case the loyal "White Woman of the Genessee" is silent. As the wife of Hiakatoo, Mary Jemison became the mother of a large family, who inherited a sort of Kingship or overlordship of the Senecas in Western New York State. The last "King" Jemison died several years ago near Red House, on the Allegheny River; in his lifetime he sold patent medicines in Pittsburg, and exhibited a unique collection of Indian relics, including the silver war crowns of Chiefs Cornplanter, Blacksnake, and Red Jacket. Mary Jemison is principally remembered by her book of memoirs which she dictated to James E. Seaver, an historian, shortly before her death, and which gives a vivid picture of Indian warfare and pioneer conditions during her long life. Her influence on the Indians was beneficent, and her aim was always to bring the two races together in friendly intercourse, her feeling being that, of the two, the Indians were the least savage and warlike. Eastern Pennsylvania can claim another equally picturesque Indian captive in Regina Hartman, yet her unmarked last resting place in Tulpehocken Churchyard, near Stouchsburg, Berks County, is known only to a few, among them Dr. Walker L. Stephen, of Reading, the best-posted Indian folk-lorist in Pennsylvania. If Regina Hartman had lived in New England or Europe she would rank as one of the great historical personages of all time, yet Pennsylvania claims only a mild acquaintance with her. For the benefit of those present who have not heard of her strange story, we will summarize it briefly. During an Indian attack along the Blue Mountains, in the vicinity of the present Town of Orwigsburg, Regina, then nine years of age, was carried into captivity by the Indians, and for seven years was taken from place to place by her raptors. At last,

after the final peace of the French and Indian War, in 1763, when Mary Jenison elected to remain with the Indians, a great army of white prisoners were turned over to the British Colonial forces, and sent east to Carlisle Barracks, to be restored to their relatives. Regina Hartman's mother journeyed to Carlisle, but out of the long line of sunburned children who were marched past her could not recognize her long lost daughter. The unhappy woman in bitter disappointment after her long trip, broke down and wept. Her grief attracted the attention of Colonel Henry Bouquet, the brave deliverer of Fort Duquesne, a Huguenot from Switzerland, who was in charge of the released captives, and addressing her in Pennsylvania German, he asked if there was any song that she used to sing to her missing daughter in the old childhood days. The poor woman recollected one particular hymn, and going along the lines of refugees started to sing:

"Allein, and doch nicht ganz allein
Bin ich"——

It was there that a tall girl sprang from the crowd, and fell into her mother's arms. The reunion was complete and Regina spent the remainder of her life ministering to her mother's comfort at their humble home in Northern Berks County. After her mother's death she lived alone, becoming known locally as a saint, through manifold deeds of goodness and charity. Now she rests in an unmarked grave, and later historians have attempted to class her as a myth, alongside of "Molly Pitcher," who luckily has been rescued from such obloquy by the prompt action of the Pennsylvania Legislature and Governor Brumbaugh. In 1916, when the handsome bronze monument to Mary Ludwig, known as "Molly Pitcher," a real daughter of the American Revolution, was unveiled in the old Cemetery at Carlisle, her identity was made sure by the engraving of all her names, and her sobriquet, on the front of the granite pedestal, so that she may rank for all time as one of the greatest of Pennsylvania heroines. Mary Ludwig, known as "Molly with the Pitcher" and "Molly Pitcher," was born in the Palatinate, but brought as a small child by her parents to Berks County; later they moved to the Cumberland Valley, where Mary became a servant in the home of Colonel William Irvine. At the time of the Revolution she was the wife of Sergeant Casper Hays; at the battle of Monmouth, when her husband, a cannoneer was wounded she success-

fully took charge of the cannon; and later when relieved carried water to the soldiers under fire. It is said that General Washington was an observer of her bravery, and made her a sergeant by brevet. In the battle, one of her former admirers, a man of wealth and position, was given up for dead, and tossed into a trench for burial the next morning. Despite the fatigues of the day, Molly crept out at dead of night, and carried him back to the lines, and helped to nurse him back to health. After the war she returned to Carlisle, where Sergeant Hays died; later she married Sergeant Jerry McCanley, a semi-invalid from shell shock. In her later years she scrubbed the marble floors of the Court House at Carlisle, unable to support her helpless husband and children on a pension of \$40.00 per year. For further information concerning this remarkable woman see the article by Rev. C. P. Wing, in "Pennsylvania Magazine," 1879, Volume III, and Judge E. W. Biddle's scholarly address delivered at the time of the dedication of the monument. Among the lesser known Pennsylvania heroines, Somerset County is justly proud of Peggy Marteeny, the daughter of Henry Marteeny, an old soldier of the Revolution, of Huguenot antecedents. During an attack by Indians along the old Forbes Road, Peggy was riding her spotted Spanish pony through the woods when she came upon a white man, badly wounded, and badly frightened, running for dear life, closely pursued by redmen, who were brandishing scalping knives. Without a moment's hesitation Peggy sprang from her horse, and put the white man on it, then giving it a few smacks across the flanks, sent the animal galloping away, trusting to her own long legs to escape the savage pursuers. Somerset County was also the home of Rebecca Statler and Rhoda Boyd, heroines of Indian adventures. Near "Molly Pitcher's" handsome monument in the ancient Cemetery at Carlisle, are the graves of Hugh H. Brackenridge, the distinguished Pittsburg Jurist, and author of that amusing work "Modern Chivalry," a story much on the style of "Don Quixote"—and his wife, formerly the Pennsylvania German girl Sabina Wolfe. On one of Judge Brackenridge's horeback journeys through the mountains he noticed the graceful Sabina nimbly vaulting over a stake and rider fence, and fell in love with her on the spot; athletic prowess still seems to be a compelling motive in the awakening of love, for we have recently read in the papers of a wealthy western youth who eloped with a show girl, who he said

he fell in love with after she had won a race on a Pogo stick at the Midnight Follies. The Brackenridge-Wolfe marriage turned out very well, so much so that the unknown Sabina soon became the social arbiter of the Smoky City. Pennsylvania Mountain girls are noted not only for their beauty, but for their courage. Kentucky accords a high place in history to the small dark girl, Mabel Hite, whose forbears went from Berks County to the "Dark and Bloody Ground" for her heroism in carrying water under a heavy fire from hostile Indians to the brave defenders of the Fort at Bryant's Station, who were an earlier "Lost Battalion" and might have perished of thirst but for the intrepid bravery of this young Pennsylvania girl. Barbara Frietchie, who some historians say was a myth, but will ever be immortalized in Whittier's stirring poem, was born in Pennsylvania, but was taken to Frederick, Maryland, by her parents at an early age. Your speaker once asked General Henry Kyd Douglas of Hagerstown, who was an Aide to General "Stonewall" Jackson during his famous ride through Frederick Town, if Barbara Frietchie really lived. The old General replied that he knew Barbara well, that she was no myth, the only mythical part was that the flag which she hung out was the stars and bars, and not the stars and stripes. Perhaps in the excess of his Southern sympathies, this gallant old Confederate may have been temporarily color blind. Another celebrated frontier girl was Frances Slocum, the Indian captive of the Wyoming Valley, whose memory is splendidly perpetuated by the able historians of the North Branch Valley; then there is Elizabeth Zane, the early love of Daniel Boone, a Pennsylvania frontier girl whose life was full of stirring adventures, and whose relatives were the founders of Zanesville, Ohio; there is Jennie Wade, the unhappy heroine of the Battle of Gettysburg, shot while baking bread the same day that her lover was killed in battle, and Jane Annesley, the beautiful red headed girl of the West Branch Valley, whose auburn tresses were coveted by the warlike Indian Skanando, and who followed her until he scalped her. She survived the scalping many years, being still remembered by older residents about Lock Haven as an aged woman hoeing corn, wearing a black scull cap. And we must not forget to mention Genevieve Loverhill, the intrepid girl scout and scalp hunter, also of the West Brandy Valley. The mother of the immortal Abraham Lincoln, plain Nancy Hanks, was of Pennsylvania origin, like her husband Thomas Lincoln. By a strange

coincidence the early homes of the Lincoln, Hanks, and Boone families were close together in Eastern Berks County. Montgomery, Chester, and Berks County have vied with one another as the early home of the Hanks family, but Rev. J. W. Early, a venerable clergyman of Reading, writing on the 100th anniversary of "Father Abraham's" Birth, in 1909, in the Reading Times, stated that the family originated in Berks County, and the early spelling of the name was Hanck, whereas in Chester County there is a family called Hanke, possibly of a different stock. Nancy Hanks, the typical pioneer mother, occupies an outstanding place in the Nation's history, and we can feel closer to her, and her ideals, by reckoning her as one of our Pennsylvania women. Dr. Stephen, before mentioned, tells us that Jane Borthwick, to whom Robert Burns, in his youth, dedicated several lovely poems, and who later emigrated to Pennsylvania, is buried in Womelsdorf, Berks County. We cannot close this rambling discourse without mentioning a little known Centre County heroine, Mary Wolford, for whom Young Woman's Town, now ruthlessly re-named North Bend, and Young Woman's Creek, now ruthlessly polluted by tanneries, are named. While encamped with her parents, formerly from Buffalo Valley, near the great hollow buttonwood tree, below Milesburg, where the spartan Indian chief Woapalannee, or Bald Eagle, is said to have slept standing up, this fierce warrior fell in love with the tall, slim and beautiful pioneer girl. She was indifferent to his advances, being engaged to James Quigley Brady, the "Young Captain of the Susquehanna," a younger brother of the famous Captain "Sam" Brady. Bald Eagle managed to have the "Young Captain" scalped, which caused his death, and later captured Mary Wolford, and started North with her, towards the old Boone Road, leading to New York State. Somewhere, beyond the creek, which now bears her name, the lovely Mary broke loose from her captors, although a wooden gag was in her mouth, and her hands were tied behind her back. Boldly she plunged into the stream, which was swollen by a flood; gagged and her arms helpless, she was carried off by the swift current and drowned. Days afterwards her body was washed ashore at Northumberland, near where young Brady was buried, and the lovers sleep their long sleep side by side. There are many more forgotten Pennsylvania heroines, but the list just given will suffice for the present. If we can honor these, as are their due, we will have enhanced the cause of Pennsylvania his-

tory and helped to place it alongside that of New York, New England, the South, and other sections where deeds of worth and valor are recognized. All of these forgotten women were brave, courageous, simple and God fearing, well worthy to serve as a high ideal for our young girlhood. They also show that the noblest traits are found in the humblest homes, that womanhood can be brave and intrepid just as much as man, that there are self-made women as well as self-made men. Some day let us hope that in the rotunda of the Capitol at Harrisburg, purged of its group of professional politician statues, or some Hall of Fame specially constructed for the purpose, we can gaze upon lifelike effigies in marble of Lucretia Mott, Mary Jemison, Regina Hartman, Molly Pitcher, Peggy Marteeny, Mabel Hite, Frances Slocum, Mary Wolford, and above all Nancy Hanks, typical of the most exalted heights to which womanhood can attain, unaided, many of them untaught, but pure in patriotism, pure in heart, the bright galaxy of the glory of Pennsylvania womanhood. We cannot honor them too highly, we cannot praise them extravagantly enough, for they are milestones in the normal development of our feminism. This great work is going on. That women of equal worth are being born under similar conditions and are alive today, let us but remember that Jane Addams, the daughter of a Berks County innkeeper, has done more for her sex, and for humanity in general than almost any other woman living, and carries out fully the lofty standard that Pennsylvania sets for its womanhood.



3477-79 - 2
55

FEB 77



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 310 692 5

